

# Feminist Research Methodologies

Source: Griffiths and Hope (2000) *Access to Sociology: Stratification and Differentiation*

Mies (1997) has argued that there are seven methodological guidelines for feminist research:

1. **Conscious partiality** — the researcher should partially identify with the research objects, recognising that they are part of a social whole, but enabling the correction of distortion on both sides.
2. **View from below** — research is seen to serve the interests of those who are dominated, exploited and oppressed, particularly women.
3. **Active participation in actions, movements and struggles** — feminist research grew out of the women's movement and should therefore support female emancipation.
4. **Change of the status quo** — to understand patriarchy, feminist research must fight against female oppression, rather than examining the surface consequences of it, such as housework. A breakdown of 'normal life for women will reveal their consciousness.
5. **Conscientisation** — the research methodologies must be carried out by the objects of oppression, thereby the objects of research (women) become the subject (female social scientists) of their own research and action.
6. **Study of women's individual and social history** - women have not made history their own, therefore their struggles and dreams have not been ignored. Women's history must be seen in order for Women to have a collective conscience and challenge patriarchy.
7. **Women must collectivise their own experiences** — research must be for the good of all women, based on shared methodology with other feminists and group discussions. Realising a collective experience can provide diversified experience and relieve structural isolation for women. Feminist researchers claim that social scientific research has a masculine bias and therefore produces a male view of social life that ignores the experiences of women. For example, the examination of 'work' is a reference in sociology to paid employment and ignores the work that women do in the home.

1. Name four writers in the feminist research tradition.
2. To which sociological tradition does the term 'collective conscience' belong?
3. Which sociological research tradition would reject feminism as unsociological?
4. Can men be feminists? Explain your answer with reference to the passage.
5. Many feminists are historians or use historical documents. Explain the reasoning behind this.
6. Offer three examples from your own studies to show how research has often been gendered and females sidelined from the current discourse.
7. Why do feminists argue that it is essential to identify with the objects of study?
8. What dangers are inherent in this approach?
9. I identify three practical problems with feminist research methodology.
10. I identify three ethnical problems with feminist research methodology.